



News Release

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
John L. Clayton, Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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www.de.state.az.us

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DES Responds to Victims of Rodeo-Chedeski Wildfires

The Department of Economic Security, an integrated human services agency, is providing emergency financial and logistical support to individuals, families, and employers affected by the Rodeo-Chedeski wildfires in northeastern Arizona.

In response to Governor Jane Dee Hull's request, President Bush declared a major disaster in the area thereby enabling DES to utilize special federal provisions for approving food stamps, unemployment benefits and employer tax relief.

"We at DES are committed to marshalling our resources in support of the victims of this disaster, not only to meet their immediate needs, but for the long recovery process ahead," said John Clayton, Director of DES.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has authorized DES to issue **disaster food stamps** effective July 1 for victims from the following areas: **Aripine, Clay Springs, Fools Hollow, Heber, Hon Dah, McNary, Lakeside, Linden, Overgaard, Pinedale, Pinedale Estates, Pinetop, Shady Ranch, Show Low and Timberland Acres.** Residents who are not usually eligible for food stamps may qualify temporarily if their home or belongings were damaged or destroyed and they have disaster-related expenses or if they have lost income, food or money as a result of the wildfires. Those applying should bring a driver's license or other picture ID. They also will need the social security numbers for everyone in the household. Disaster food stamps will be issued at the **evacuation centers in Eager, Glendale, Globe, Holbrook, Mesa, Payson, St. Johns and Winslow.** For a family of four, a full monthly allotment is \$452.

Residents in the affected areas who are **already participating in the food stamp program** will automatically have their food allotment replaced electronically and a supplemental allotment will be issued in July to

bring the household's benefit up to the maximum disaster food stamp allotment for the household size. They will not need to file an additional application for disaster food stamps.

Unemployment Insurance claims, as well as **Disaster Unemployment Assistance claims**, are also being processed in an expedited manner throughout the state. Anyone rendered unemployed due to the fires will qualify for Disaster Unemployment Assistance under the following conditions:

- Not otherwise eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits from any state, and;
- No longer has a job or is no longer self-employed, or;
- Is unable to reach the work location, or;
- Was to commence working and does not have a job or is unable to reach the work location, or;
- Has become the "breadwinner" for a household because the previous head of household cannot work because of a disaster-related injury.

For more information regarding filing options, call toll free statewide: 1-866-213-8721 and within the Phoenix Metro area: (602) 364-1650

DES has immediately implemented emergency **Unemployment Insurance Tax Relief** for employers adversely affected by the wildfires. Employers can request an extension of time for filing unemployment tax and wage reports by contacting (602) 248-9354, ext. 1420.

To protect clients and staff members, DES programs in the affected areas have relocated to safer locations and will continue to provide their necessary services. The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) has relocated clients in four group homes and is operating out of a Flagstaff office. All DES foster children affected have remained with evacuated foster families and continue to receive services. The Aging and Adult Administration provided local law enforcement with information regarding home-bound elderly and have assisted in the relocation of people previously living in nursing homes in the Show Low area. The Community Services Administration is supporting the food bank and food pantry network in ensuring the fire victims have food.

All other DES programs will continue providing services on an on-going basis from surrounding communities.

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